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The
MARBLE LILY
AND
OTHER POEMS.

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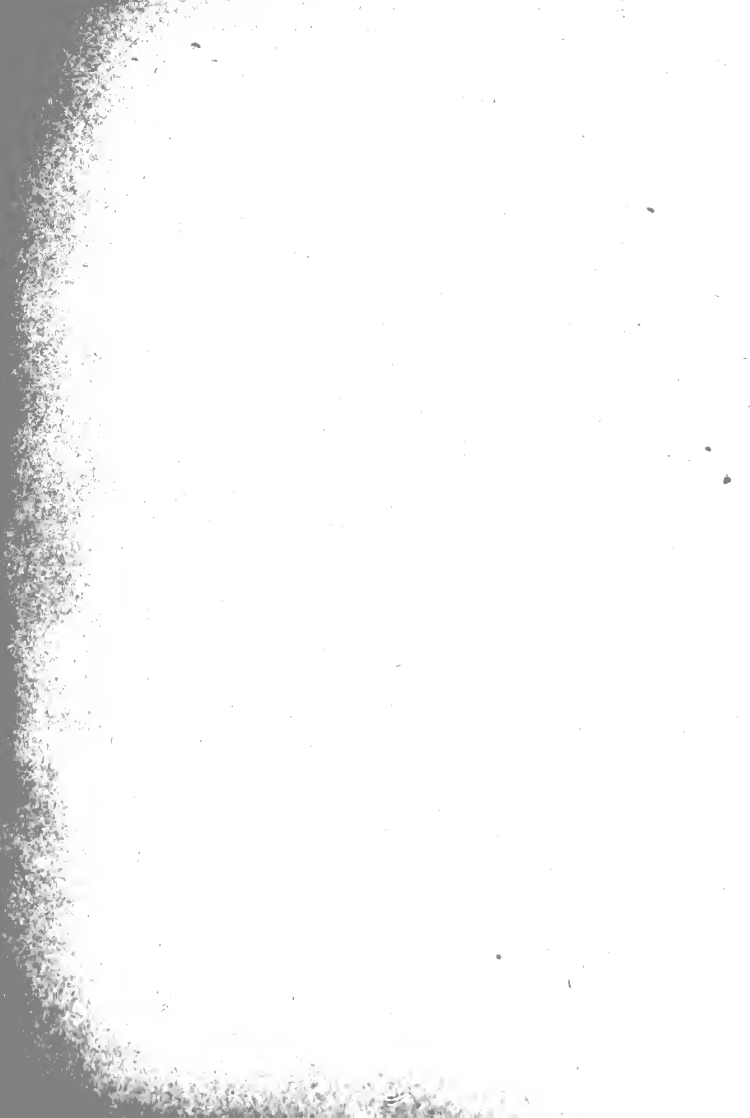
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THE
MARBLE LILY.

AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY
MRS. FLORENCE D. WEST.

(PRIVATE EDITION.)



1878.

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THE MARBLE LILY.

Shaking the clouds of marble dust away,
A youthful sculptor wanders forth alone,
While twilight, rosy with the kiss of day,
Glowes like a wondrous flower but newly blown.
There lives within his deep and mystic eyes,
The magic light of true and happy love,
Tranquil his bosom as the undimmed skies,
Smiling so gently from the depths above.

All nature whispers sweet and blissful things,
To that young heart, rich with emotions warm—
Ah, rarely happy is the song it sings;
And strangely tender, is its witching charm!
He wanders to the margin of a lake,
Whose placid waves lie hushed in sleeping calm,
So faint the breeze, it may not bid them wake,
Tho' breathing through their dreams, its odorous
balm.

A regal lily stands upon the shore,
Dropping her dew-pearls on the mosses green,
Her stately forehead, and her bosom pure,
Bathed in the moonlight's pale and silver sheen.

The sculptor gazes on the queenly flower,
Until his white cheek burns with crimson flame,
And his heart owns a sweet, and subtle power,
Stealing like music through his weary frame.

The magic influence of his mighty art,
The magic influence of his mighty love,
Their mingled passion to his life impart,
And his deep nature, each can wildly move.
These passions sway his inmost being now,
His art, his love, are all the world to him;
Before the stately flower, ah, see him bow!
Breathing the love that makes his dark eyes
dim.

"Thou art the emblem of my bosom's queen,
And she, as thou, is formed with perfect grace,
Stately she moves with lofty air serene,
And pure thoughts beaming from her angel face.
While yet thy bosom holds this silver dew,
And moonbeams pale with passion for thy sake,
In fairest marble I'll thy life renew,
Ere the young daylight bids my love awake."

A wondrous flower shone upon the dark,
A lily-bloom of marble, pure and cold,
Perfected in its beauty, as the lark,
Soared to the drifting clouds of ruddy gold.

The sculptor fondly clasped the image fair
To his young ardent heart, then swiftly passed
To where a lovely face, 'mid floating hair,
A splendor o'er the dewy morning cast.

She beamed upon him from her casement's height,
The fairest flower that greeted the new day—
He held aloft the lily, gleaming white,
While tender smiles o'er her sweet features play.
Presenting his fair gift on bended knee—
“Wilt thou beloved, cherish this pure flower?
T'was born of moonlight, and a thought of thee,
And well will grace thy cool and verdant bower.

And when these blushing blossoms droop and pine,
Chilled by the ^{*cruel*} ~~cold~~ North wind's icy breath,
Unwithered still, these marble leaves will shine,
Calm and serene, untouched by awful *death*.”
The summer days flew by like bright winged
dreams,

Filling those hearts with fancies fond and sweet,
But when the first frost cooled the sun's warm
beams,

The purest, gentlest one, had ceased to beat.

How like she seemed, clad in her church-yard
dress,

To that cold flower he chiseled for her sake!

What wild despairing kisses did he press,
On those sealed eyes, that never more shall
wake!

His clinging arms enfold her once again,
In one long hopeless passionate embrace,
Then that sweet maiden, freed from mortal pain,
Hid 'neath the flowers, her sad and wistful face.

The world that once was fairy land to him,
Now seemed a desert waste, of verdure bare—
He only walked abroad in moonlight dim,
And shunned the gaudy sun's unwelcome
glare—

Each night he sits beside a small green mound,
O'er which a marble lily lifts its head
With trembling dew and pearly moonbeams
crowned,
Fit emblem of the calm and sinless dead.

He never tires of that sad trysting place,
But waits and listens through the quiet night,
Surely she comes from mystic realms of space,
To bid my darkened spirit seek the light.
Be patient, my wild heart! yon glowing star
Wears the fond look of her soft pleading eyes,
Gently she draws me to that world afar,
And bids me hush these sad and longing sighs.

Thus mused he as the solemn nights passed by,
Still holding that sweet hope within his soul,
And always peering in the tender sky

With earnest longings for that blissful goal.
One radiant night when summer ruled the land,
He sought the darling's bed of dreamless rest,
The wooing breeze, his pale cheek softly fanned,
With balmy sighs from gardens of the blest.

A witching spell o'er that fair scene was cast,
Thrilling his sad heart with a wild delight,
And steeped in visions of the heavenly past,
He gazed upon the lily gleaming white.
Jewels of diamond dew glowed on its breast,
And the rich moonlight, mellow, yet intense,
In golden robes the quiet church-yard dressed,
Pouring its glory through the shadows dense.

A nightingale flew from a neighboring tree,
And on the marble lily folds his wings,
His full heart trembles with its melody—
Of Love, and Heaven, he passionately sings.
The sculptor gazing through his happy tears,
Feels his whole being thrill with sudden bliss,
An Angel's voice in accents soft he hears,
And trembles on his lips an Angel's kiss.

His hope has bloomed ! above the marble
flower,

Radiant with heavenly beauty, see her stand !
His heart makes music like a ^{silver}~~golden~~ shower

As fondly beckons that soft snowy hand.
The pallid moon faints in the brightening sky,
And morning blushes burn o'er land and sea,
Staining a cold, cold cheek, with rosy dye,
The sculptor's weary waiting soul is free !

As onward glide the years through bloom and
blight,

Unchanged the marble lily lifts its head,
Through summer's sun, through winter's snow so
white,

Unheeded sleep the calm and blessed dead,
Where ever falls the pure and pearly dew,
Where ever blooms the fresh and fragrant rose,
In that far world removed from mortal view,
Two loving souls in perfect bliss repose.

WINTER MOONLIGHT.

Oh wondrous moonlight! falling cold,
On rock, and river, waste and wold,
Look in the deeps of my sad heart,
And freeze the tears that fain would start.

Thy icy touch will still their flow,
And make that heart forget the glow
Of vanished summers, dead and gone,
Those mocking dreams of life's young morn.

Chill those warm memories with thy glance,
And pierce them with jeweled lance,
So shall Regret breathe its last sigh,
And keen Remembrance dormant lie.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

Through the mist of the Autumn evening,
An angel floats to me,
An angel of wonderful beauty
With voice of melody.

The dreamy glow of the twilight hour,
Lives in her deep, deep eyes,
And sadly sweet, as æolian strains,
Are her low and tender sighs.

While she gazes at me so fondly,
On her lips a faint smile glows,
Like the silvery moonlight sleeping
In the red heart of a rose.

While I look, a magic brightness
O'er her dusky tresses plays—
Whence comes that beautiful light? she speaks—
"Tis the light of other days.

And I am Memory, come to guide thee
Through the graveyard of the Past;
where Whence Death's arms clasp the cherished dreams
That were too fair to last.

Roses of the Long ago summers
Feeling my touch, shall glow
And sparkle with gleaming dew drops,
While sweet airs whisper low.

The vanished faces of dear ones
Gone to the spirit shore,
Shall look in thine with fondest love,
Thrilling thy heart to its core.

They will speak to thee in accents soft,
Wandering amid the flowers ;
Their wreathing arms shall clasp thee round,
As in life's morning hours.

She leads me with her gentle hand
Into the dismal night,
Where all those unforgotten ones
Lie buried from my sight.

The touch of her magic fingers
Calls them to life again,
As the eyes of dreaming flowers
Ope to the whisp'ring rain.

From their graves they throng around me,
Their voices fill the air,
While over the bright hued blossoms
Smiles moonlight pure and fair.

For all is changed—the fierce wild ^{wind} mind
Is lulled to a Zephyr's sigh,
And glowing stars look fondly down,
From deeps of summer sky.

The murmuring streams make music soft,
Through velvet grass they steal,
And sing love songs to the blushing flowers,
That by the clear waves kneel.

Those happy days have come again—
Up springs my longing heart!
To join the throng of buried loves,
And never more to part.

But while I gaze those visions fair
Melt fast from sight away,
And I am alone in the darkening room,
Alone with shadows grey.

For the angel bright who cheered my soul,
With a sight of the dear dead years,
Has hid herself from my longing eyes,
And they weep *such bitter tears!*

THE FEVER DREAM.

In a forest old and dim,
So dim—so old—
There's a cup with mossy brim,
Sparkling and cold.

Bending branches o'er it droop,
So low—so low—
That the blushing flow'rets stoop
To hide their glow.

In the green heart of the dell,
It ever sings—
Tinkling like a fairy bell,
Still, still, it rings.

Tearful violets bend low
Their blue wet eyes,
Breathing on the waves below,
Soft perfumed sighs.

Clinging moss the cool drops sip,
As they fall—fall—
Rosebuds in the water dip,
And daisies small.

No flaunting flowers grow there,
All red and gold,
But white lilies saintly fair
Their sweets unfold.

Falling from the fond embrace
Of the Jas'mine vine,
On the fountain's sky-like face,
Flower-stars shine.

Moonlight wraps this dell at night,
And young star-beams
Fill the hearts of roses white,
With such sad dreams.

That waking they start to see
In the clear stream,
On faces wan and pearly,
Bright tear drops gleam.

When the twilight magic weaves
O'er the fair skies,
Angel faces through the leaves,
Look, with calm eyes.

A tender voice like a prayer,
Whispers "mortal, come,
Leave a world no longer fair,
Make this thy home—

Rest thy head in these dim bowers,
Sip this cool wave;
Bind on thy brow these dripping flowers,
Here, make thy grave.

Where these soft shadows play,
Death will be sweet—
Pain and sorrow flee away,
Heart, cease to beat!"

THE DEAD SOLDIER.

From Memory's sacred censer,
A fragrant incense floats,
Filling my heart with fancies sad
As the whip-poor-will's soft notes.
From out that silvery mystic cloud,
A wan face looks on mine,
And on it beams a pallid light,
Like Autumn's dim moonshine.
The soul that burned within those eyes,
No more lights up their gloom,

And on those firm and manly lips,
Rests the calmness of the tomb.
'Mid the battles wild and fearful storm,
Faded his life's young star,
But its dying rays of glory flashed
O'er the blood red tide of war.
No woman's hand was there to smooth
His weary aching brow,
No tender kiss fell on its calm
A rose leaf on the snow—
He might have clasped the faithful hand
Of some comrade tried and true
But the pressure of that gentler one,
Alas, he never knew!
Ah! who can tell what farewell words
Came from those lips so pale,
As his patriot soul passed bravely forth,
On the battles fearful gale!
Thus died he for his country's weal,
And left few friends to weep:
Yet in *one* heart his memory gleams,
A pearl, in the great deep—
And oft as fades the sunsets glow,
And burns the evening star,
His spirit seems to float to her
From that dim world afar.

VIOLET.

When the purple summer twilight
Was waning to its close,
And tenderly the silver dew,
Clung to the sleeping rose;

When the first bright star of evening
Flashed through the rosy sky,
And the perfumed wind was singing
Its song of witchery,

I wandered where the forest spring
Pours forth its liquid tones
And gushes o'er the soft green moss
That hides the hoary stones.

A tender dream lay in my heart,
A timid nest'ling dove;
The dream we all dream once in life—
That blissful dream of love.

Gazing into the fountain clear
My eyes grew dim and wet,
Thinking of one bewitching face—
The face of Violet!

For I had prayed her to meet me
Under the queenly moon,
And she with tremors and blushes
Promised to grant the boon.

Raising my eyes from the wavelets
Kissed by the soft South breeze,
I saw the gleam of snowy robes
Through the dim shadowy trees.

"I've come," she said; her voice was like
A chime of fairy bells,
And fell as softly on my heart,
As starlight in deep dells.

I sought her blue bewildering eyes,
But they were drooping low,
And the rosebud on her gentle breast
Was heaving with its snow.

I said to her "Look up, dear love!
Look up, sweet Violet,
And tell me if the star of hope,
For me, must ever set?

The music of my life art thou,
Thou'st bound me unto thee,
As the lady moon with magic chains
Binds the great restless sea—

As sinks the shadows of the moon
In his unfathomed breast,
So sinks thy image in my heart
That throbs with strange unrest."

Her timid hand stole into mine
As the glorious moon came up,
And turned the dew to drops of gold
In every flower's cup.

It showered streams of mellow light
On the silken sunny hair,
And glowed upon her blushing cheeks,
And soft white arms all bare.

I held her dainty trembling hand
Clasped close within my own,
As if it were a white winged dove,
That would from me have flown—

I felt her breath against my cheek,
Fragrant as mignonette—
Two red lips whispered low to me,
"I'll be thy Violet!"

That blissful hour, that fairy time,
I never can forget,
For then I won my woodland flower,
My blue eyed Violet.

TO ONE REMEMBERED.

The wine of life is drugged for me
With Memory's bitter leaf,
Those ruby drops that thrilled my veins
Now flow in sombre grief.
The glory of my morning hours
Has burned to ashes grey,
And the freshness of that tender dawn
Has passed for aye away.
Yet still within this rifled heart
A gentle feeling dwells,
Filling its depths with sounds as sweet
As chimes of distant bells.
I listen to that music rare
That softly floats to me,
As the sailor greets the first land breeze
That ripples the calm sea.
It brings a dream of Spring's young flowers,
Of skies undimmed and blue.
Of moonlight's pure and soothing power,
Of longings fond and true.
As falls the fragrant pearly dew
Upon the sleeping lea,
So drinks my heart this fountain sweet—
This *memory* of *thee*.

ON THE DEATH OF A LITTLE CHILD.

How peacefully she sleeps!
This tender little flower,
Her white lids closed like lily leaves,
At evening's stilly hour.
No breath parts those sweet lips,
Still tinted with the rose;
No pulse beats in that tiny hand,
Whiter than mountains' snows.
Gazing upon this placid form,
In death's embrace asleep,
Who does not wish to still the heart
With rest as sweet and deep;
God called her from this weary world,
To one of heavenly peace—
Death laid his finger on her heart,
And bade life's music cease.
Gently she passed from earth to Heaven,
As stars fade from the night,
Or as the pearly dew exhales,
In the sunbeams golden light.
All's well with thee, dear little child,
No storm shall ere assail
Thee in that home, whose radiant joys,
No sorrow ere shall pale.

THE VANISHED CHARM.

The fresh'ning beauties of this April day,
Tinged with the early sunshines rosy glow,
The happy songs of newly wakened birds,
The merry tinkling bells of distant herds,
The fragrant airs that o'er the prairies blow.

All breathe of life renewed, and rich with love
And tell us hope is ruling the glad earth,
That tears in spring's bright time should cease
to flow,
That roses on young cheeks should blush and
glow,
When all things own a new and glorious birth.

But ah! these gentle thoughts are not for me—
No more shall tender spring-time move my
heart!

It once thrilled strangely to the opening year,
Blooming responsive to its teachings dear,
While Hope breathed softly—"We will never
part!"

The streamlet rocking on its singing waves,
The dying sunlight's fairest, faintest beams,
Thinks of the coming night so dark and chill,
And sighs for kisses, warm and sweet, to thrill
Its trembling bosom, stirred by mystic dreams.

It cannot be—the last bright rays depart,
And dusky shadows dim its throbbing breast ;
Cold gleaming chains of moonlight bind it round,
Its struggling waves with sparkling silver crowned,
Sob wildly as they toss in strange unrest.

Thus died the influence of a golden hope,
Gilding the tide of life with radiance rare—
The rosy presence warms it never more.
Cold, cold, the dark'ning waters beat the shore,
Wailing forever for that vision fair!

SONG.

LITTLE NINA.

Thou hast bewitched my heart fair maiden,
And bound it with a silken chain :
With teasing love it now is laden,
And many a sweet delicious pain.

Ah, little Nina !

Dear little Nina !

Cruel enchantress my struggles are vain !

I raise my eyes with looks of pleading,
To thine, of sparkling laughing jet ;
But ah, thou look'st at me unheeding,
And all my sighing dost forget.

Ah, little Nina !

Fair little Nina !

Thou art a winsome, heartless coquette :

Thy dewy lips sometimes do quiver,
Like rose-leaves in the summer air ;
Then through my veins there comes a shiver
Of mingled hope and deep despair—

But, little Nina !

Sweet little Nina !

Relentless Angel thou dost not care.

DESOLATION.

The wind moans through the sorrowful midnight,
Wild clouds rush o'er a sky once summer-bright,

And wan stars feebly struggle with the gloom,
Like lost souls battling with a mighty doom.

Over the desolated earth, decay
Steals like a lion on his dreaming prey.

Soon will her glorious beauty melt away,
And ice and death, assert their awful sway.

In one poor heart the winter-time has come,
And frost lies on its flowers, where once rose-
bloom

Did blush and brighten, filling that fair shrine
With beauty that it felt to be divine.

The voices of this wild Autumnal night
Rush through its rifled chambers, and affright

The ghostly memories, that lie cowering where
Hope's dying embers cast a fading glare.

No comfort do they bring to this sad heart,
These solemn voices can no peace impart—

They only chill it with their icy breath,
And whisper one dread word—that word is *Death!*

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND.

This child-like woman young and fair,
Has entered on a larger life ;
Closing her eyes to pain and care,
Calm sleeps this gentle wife.

'Tis well for her that thus she sleeps,
For waking brings us sad unrest.
Her pure soul in its inmost deeps,
Feels peace, and is divinely blest.

No anxious thoughts can touch her breast,
No bitter tears dim her sweet eyes,
Nor earthly love break heavenly rest,
Or call her from her native skies.

We could not see the cherub forms
That hovered o'er her day by day,
Wooing her from this world of storms,
In pleading tones to come away.

Her memory, like a summer rose
 Pressed on the restless heart's worn page,
Its perfumed petals will enclose,
 And gentlest, purest thoughts engage.

For us the shadows and the gloom,
 The longings for eternal peace—
For her the land of bliss and bloom,
 And Angel's song that never cease.

THE BEE AND THE FLOWER.

One day when golden sunshine steeped the earth
In a bright bath of warm and mellow light,
And the blue dreamy mist hung lovingly
Upon the ^{rugged} ~~ragged~~ bosoms of the hills,
I looked into the distant sky so violet blue,
And as I gazed I dreamed this wondrous dream:

A flower of wild and fragrant beauty lived
Within the shadow of a purple dell—
Beside it flowed a sweetly singing stream,
Whose merry face was covered o'er with smiles,
And whose soft voice could soothe the mourn-
 ful wind
Into silence and deep rest.

The tall old trees would lowly, gently stoop
To clasp the streamlet in their guarding arms,
While the fair flower bent over the clear waves
And saw her lovely image mirrored there.

How dazzling fair she was and saintly pure!
Her cheek had known no blush save sunset's dye,
No kisses save the gentle summer winds;
She said "no butterfly with gaudy wings
Shall ever steal my heart away from me,
Nor any honey-bee with lulling voice
Sing me to sleep, and then with cruel lips
Rifle my bosom of its nectar sweet.
My ear will listen to no tones of love
But the fond whispers of the gentle breeze—
The soothing melody of this dear stream."
Thus said the flower—how little did she know
Her young and tender heart, when thus she spoke.

One night, when moonlight wrapped her sleeping
form

In that pale silvery robe which dreamers love,
And the mocking-bird poured streams of melody
Through the enchanted darkness of the night,
She woke with tears upon her pallid face,
And through the mist of moonlight and of dreams,
Saw wandering, a poor benighted bee.

He whispers to her earnestly
"Oh! I am lost and dying, gentle flower:
Let me but rest my head on your soft breast
A little while, and I shall surely live—
Oh, hide me! for this lovely cruel light,
Is chilling me to weariness and death.
Into your young white heart, so dainty sweet,
Let me but creep till morning comes again,
And all my life I'll serve and worship you."

The wanderer seemed so weary and so sad,
That she could not resist his pleading voice,
So folded him among her perfumed leaves,
And hid him from the moonlight pure and cold.

Ah! what a woe and bitterness was hers!
For when the traitor entered her fair heart
He quaffed the sweetness from its virgin bloom.
And ere the morning sunshine smiled, alas!
Her fragrance had departed with the bee.

As full of grief she bowed her fragile form,
The tiny petals fell upon the waves,
And one by one, they floated far away.
The old trees tossed their arms and sadly
 moaned,
And the sad breezes sobbed themselves asleep—
Their little flower, so fair and sweet, was dead!

My dream was but a dream, but as I thought
Of that young blossom and its dreary fate,
I wondered if there were not other hearts,
As pure and fresh as this poor flower's was,
Where *human bees* might enter with false words,
And drink the virgin sweetness from their depths.

G O N E .

The moonlight falls upon a little grave,
 Wrapped in the ^{*green*} ~~germ~~ of spring;
Young violets with sad drooping eyes
Breathe softly round their perfumed sighs,
 Where trembling dew-drops cling.

A twining vine enfolds the mossy stone
 That tells her cherished name—
Those tender leaves are whispering low,
Of the gentle heart, that long ago,
 Throbbed in that fragile frame.

Ah loving heart, so lonely hast thou left me
 A leaf on Life's wild stream,
Drifting away from that bright shore
Where we shall wander never more
 In Hope's entrancing dream.

I call thee tenderly, my slumb'ring flower,
But ah, I call in vain!
My pleading voice breaks not thy sleep,
No memory to thy soul can creep,
Thawing death's icy chain.

One kiss I leave upon this gleaming stone—
Angel, look fondly down!
Hush thy sweet harp one moment now,
Drop one pure tear upon my brow,
'Twill sparkle in thy crown!

EVENING THOUGHTS.

I'm in my lonely room, dear love;
No sound falls on my ear,
But the whip-poor-wills low plaintive cry,
And the herd bells tinklings clear.
The stars have hid their glowing rays
Behind the clouds so grey,
As lovely dreams that cheer the soul,
Melt in the weary day.
A deep and stilly darkness folds
The quiet earth to-night,
And sleep waves o'er the tired heart
Its pinions soft and light.

My thoughts have flown to thee, my love,
As bees to perfumed flowers,
And gentle memories float to me,
In these calm evening hours.
The cruel years of war and death
Seem but a fearful dream,
And come to me those blissful days
Buried in Time's deep stream,
When you and I, our hearts all filled
With hopes and fancies bright,
Sat 'neath the shade of waving trees,
In the beautiful moonlight.
I hear your voice so low and soft
Thrilling my soul with bliss ;
I read the language of your eyes,
I feel your tender kiss ;
I lean my head upon your breast,
And hear your beating heart,
While from my undimmed childish eyes
Love's happy tear-drops start.
You fold me in your gentle arms
With fondest words of love,
While o'er us falls the rich moonlight,
From the cloudless sky above.
The breezes hush their tender sighs,
And listen with delight,
And the mocking-bird thrills with his song
The bosom of the night.

Oh, tell me not the coming years
Will blot from us that time,
When in Life's wond'rous book we read
A poem of sweetest rhyme.
The theme was love—young guileless love—
Its music haunts me yet,
But the melody is strangely sad,
And my eyes with tears are wet.
Through the sombre gloom of evening
No star-beams shine out clear,
And over my waiting, anxious heart,
Broods a dark and heavy fear.

IN MEMORY OF MY LITTLE FLOWER.

One brief, brief summer-time my little flower,
Thou bloom'st for me—
Fondly I saw thee grow each sunny hour
More fair to see.
The crimson of the early rose was on thy lip
And dimpled cheek,
And the fragrant dew young violets sip
In eyes as meek.

Thou wert a simile of God, my little flower;
A tender smile,
Gleaming like sunset on an April shower,
With cheering wile.

But far too pure for me my fairest treasure,
Thou could'st not stay—
And journeyed to the land of endless pleasure,
The land of Day!

While the bright summer lived, my little one,
Life glowed in thee;
But when grim autumn's cruel work was done,
Thy soul was free!

Thy memory lives within this wayward heart,
Its purest thought,
Breathing of heaven and the immortal joys
Thy spirit sought.

Ah, still the music of that angel song,
So rarely sweet!
And plead for her whose heart has fostered wrong,
With every beat!

Bend low before the gentle Christ, my child—
Speak for me there!
Plead fondly that this weary, longing soul,
Thy rest may share.

If Angel tears will aught avail to me,
Weep, sweet one, weep.
Then may I wake to blessedness with thee,
From this dark sleep!

SONG OF THE WEARY HEART.

Sing low, thou gentle dove,
Amid the shadows of the forest dim.
Thy song reminds me of a funeral hymn,
Wafting a soul above!

Wail, wail, thou solemn wind!
The one sweet dream of life for me is o'er;
My soldier love on battle-field lies low,
And I am left behind!

Sob, sob, thou passionate rain!
The death damp gathered on his noble brow,
Like dew upon the lily's breast of snow—
He will not wake again!

And wail again thou blast!

Thy sad tones tremble on my heavy heart,
Like music upon harp-strings, and upstart
Thoughts of the blissful past.

No more, ah, never more!

Will his deep eyes look fondly into mine—
Only in dreams their tender light will shine
From the spirit's distant shore.

Break, break, thou aching heart!

Love, happiness, and hope, from thee have fled—
Thou liv'st, yet art entombed with thy dear dead.
Oh break, thou weary heart!

A WITHERED LEAF.

A withered leaf she gave to him,
Its freshness all had fled;
A crushed and lifeless thing it lies,
Through trem'bling at his faintest sighs,
As if it were not dead.

Still lives within that withered leaf
A perfume faint and rare,
So delicate—so deadly sweet,
It bids his warm blood flow less fleet,
As he stands gazing there.

Strange fancies thrill him as he looks
On that frail senseless gift—
The odor steals into his heart,
And dreams of vanished hours upstart,
And through his memory drift.

This fragile link in love's bright chain,
Still binds him to the past,
And tells of feelings pure and true,
That round her heart entwined and grew,
And tender verdure cast.

It says that through all coming years
His memory green shall be,
Till blight fall on that true heart's bloom,
And wailing voices mourn its doom,
When lost in Death's dark sea.

Ah! should he say farewell to life,
Before her star has set,
His eyes must turn on this frail leaf,
His lips say, "Let her life be brief
Or let her heart forget!"

LOST.

A dying soul, by sin enchained,
Its once white robes with crimson stained,
Turned to its captor stern and grim—
“Unbind these fetters, cruel Power!
Grant me sweet peace for one brief hour,
Pure thoughts are far away and dim.

I long to woo them back again,
To softly still this bitter pain,
And cool this burning fever fire.
Fond memories call me from the past,
Longings for Heaven that flitted fast
As music from a broken lyre.

I'm sick of this wild hopeless life
This feverish joys, this endless strife,
I sigh for deep, enduring calm.
Demon of Ill! unloose thy prey!
The night is dark—I wait for day,
And Mercy, God's pure balm.”

The king of Evil, mocking smiled,
On that poor soul by sin defiled—
“Unhappy spirit, plead no more!
No holy thought shall come to thee,
No Angel’s prayer shall set thee free,
Thy earth-clogged pinions cannot soar!

Upon thee I have set my seal,
And vainly thou to God shalt kneel,
His love and mercy sweet to crave.
Yes, long for Heaven, but long in vain,
Those blissful courts thou canst not gain,
Eternally thou art my slave!”

Then shuddered that poor wandering soul,
As Satan boasted his control,
And Sin’s dark waters wildly tossed—
It drifted on in fierce despair,
Mocked still by visions false and fair,
Wailing forever, lost! lost! lost!

SONG.

FLOATING DOWN THE RIVER.

Down the river, down the river,
In our little boat we glide—
And our tear-drops often, darling,
Mingle with the rushing tide.
For the flowers that bloomed around us,
When life's voyage we begun,
Faded now are floating by us,
Sadly sinking, one by one.
We are floating, darling, floating,
Down the river wide and lone
Floating towards the creeping shadows
List'ning to the sad sea's moan.

We embarked upon this river
In the golden long ago,
Little heeding if the voyage
Brought us happiness or woe.
Storm and sun alike we greeted,
We have bravely laughed at fears,
Clasped each other closer, darling,
Kissed away each other's tears.

But we're floating, darling, floating,
Down the river dark and lone,
Floating towards the creeping shadow,
List'ning to the sad sea's moan.

Down the river—down the river,
Ah how silently we float!
And the mournful waves sob wildly,
As they dash against our boat.
For we see no shining harbor,
And the shadows densely fall;
We are floating down the river
Far beyond all earthly call.
We are floating, darling, floating,
To the ocean vast and deep;
Clasp me closer, closer, darling,
For the breakers nearer leap!

A CHILD'S BURIAL.

Upon an evening in fair summer-time
I stood beside a newly opened grave,
The soft wind spoke in tender, mournful rhyme,
Of that lost one whom no wild prayer could save.
Upon the still and peaceful twilight hour,
Sudden gushed forth the mocking bird's sweet song.

The imprisoned soul of that dead mortal flower
On its impassioned waves seemed borne along.
Into the regions of unclouded day,
Where innocence and faith find perfect rest,
Out from these earthly shadows dim and gray,
Into God's sunshine passed our little guest.

THE STAR WORSHIPPER.

Out in the solemn night a woman stood,
And watched the star of Venus, and of love,
Ascend with stately steps the clear calm heaven,
Melting the darkness with its mellow fire.
To her sad heart came troops of wandering thoughts—
The melancholy children of the night,
That lie in ambush to assail the soul
That hopes to find in solitude, repose.
Thoughts of the present and the future, vexed
Her less, than dreams of the undying Past—
With aching brow upon her folded arms,
She tried to dull her ear to its sad plaint,
But Memory with meek, reproachful looks,

Attended near, and so the two remained.
Vainly the woman closed her weary eyes—
She could not veil their faces, beautiful
With tenderness and pathos, that belong
To the lost years of youth and innocence,
When love, and God, were more than mocking shades.
Around her was the stillness, and the peace,
Within, the consciousness of endless strife.
While yet she fought against the demon *Thought*,
The mournful North-wind's wild, impassioned sighs
Thrilled her weak soul with premonitions dire,
And floods of passionate despairing grief—
As though a mighty river had o'er leaped its banks
And turned the green monotony of waving grass
Into a seething whirl-pool, filled with wrecks
Of all the lovely things, that grew and smiled.
She listened to that deep complaining cry,
Until the shadow darkened all her life,
And while the low and hopeless sound still dwelt
Within her inner sense, as in the shell
Echoes the sad sea's unforgotten tones,
She raised her eyes—and lo! upon them shone
In soft effulgence—brightness mystical—
The mellow beams of Love's immortal star!
She fancied that its tender rays reached down,
And drew her upwards, like caressing arms,
And that its throbbing heart had found a voice,

Which said, "Adoring mortal, worship me!"
And then she lifted up her heart and prayed.
In the clear heaven it shone without a peer,
Serene and holy as a new born thought,
Fresh from the brain of that mysterious Power,
Whose attributes we vainly strive to know.
The lesser stars grew pale before its gaze,
Until in all the night there seemed but one
Great pulsing heart of scintillating light—
A drop of that imperishable flame, wherewith
The river of immortal life is filled,
From which Earth's dying children long to drink.
She said, perhaps at this o'er flowing fount
Of Nature's golden mine, I, a poor waif,
An unbeliever, sick with fear and doubt,
Might quaff some cooling drops, to soothe my soul.
And then she held it up to drink deep draughts
Of that pure peace, which she so wildly craved.
Ah, she was happy for a fleeting hour,
Up borne on Fancy's rosy tinted wing!
Happy and trusting, as a little child
That thinks Heaven lies beyond the distant blue,
And waits to see it open, so the Angels bright
May show their glories to his wondering eyes!
So waited she for the white Angel, Peace,
To float down to her from that golden world,
And light her dark soul with celestial fire.

Alas, no blessed revelation came!
And the poor soaring soul fell back to Earth,
One white truth, gleaming like a perfect pearl
Amid the blackness of its depths profound.
For sweet and restful voices of the night,
Spoke softly to her, of the power called *Death*,
So feared of mortals, yet their gentlest friend—
Great Nature's tenderest and most loving nurse,
Whose soft cool touches on the aching eyes
And wildly throbbing heart, bring instant rest.
Ah, gentle mother, kind and pitiful!
Surely thou can'st not be a foe to us,
As some have falsely said, who vainly tell
Of unknown deeps of misery or bliss,
To which thou bearest our immortal breath
To bless or curse forever in those realms,
The poor, blind, stumbling child of life's brief hour.
Ah, let us rather trust in Nature's truth,
And welcome the still night-time that she brings,
The peaceful night-time of forgetful *Death*!
We knew *thou art*, and after thee, the *dark*,
The cool, calm, restful dark, for every one—
Ah, let the woman wait with patient faith,
Knowing thou surely comest unto all!
As the pure dew in darkness are distilled,
And fall in silver drops, all silently
Into the thirsting heart's of Earth's fair flowers,

Until their balmy sighs ascend to heaven,
So, from thy mystic darkness, showers of peace
Descend upon the weary, fainting soul,
As it floats onward to that blissful land,
That *blessed* land, "where *all things are forgot!*"

SUMMER MOONLIGHT.

And now the stately moon, like some fair ship
Freighted with silver stuffs, of value rare,
Ascends the clear deeps of the summer sky,
As wafted onward by night's gentle air.

O'er the vast heaven, so calm and solemn, broods
The spirit of Great Nature's tender prayer,
And earthly hearts, touched by this heavenly peace,
Forget the burdens that fate bids them bear.

Some spark divine within this wondrous frame,
That seems so dull and dim in daylight's glare,
Kindles anew in the serene moonlight
And fills the soul with memories fond and fair.

Immortal germ! that sleeps through Life's dark night,
Feel the soft radiance pierce thy mortal clay,
And thrill and flush like an awakening rose,
Filled with bright premonitions of the *Day*.

THE HEART'S FLOWERS.

My heart! my heart! thy wail of pain,
Will not be stilled to-night,
As from thy depths the crimson stain
Turns all life's bloom to blight.

The lily leaves of faith and trust
Blush now a burning red,
And the bright drops of thy dear blood,
Are all too quickly shed.

Dost cry, my heart, in bitter woe
For those lost flowers so fair?
And mourn that that ensanguined tide
Their scattered petals bear?

Ah, hush thy cry, poor wailing heart!
Is it not always so?
Faith, Hope, and Love, frail earthly flowers,
Still wither as they blow.

SOUL-LIGHT AND STAR-LIGHT.

On the broad bosom of the solemn night
Star pulses throb and burn—

Sad human eyes watch heaven's grand life,
And human hearts, with longings rife,
Upward, imploring turn!

From soul to star, there leaps a cry—
Oh, tell me of my fate!

Within us glows the same bright fire,
An essence pure and fine, defier
Of this ignoble state!

Oh feed the spark from God's pure flame
This prison flood with light!

And bear me on thy living ray,
Beyond the reach of toiling Day
And vision-haunted night!

TO MY SLEEPING WIFE.

A poem by Col. Alfred M. Hobby.

In dreamland now thy spirit roams,
And blessed Angel's leave their homes
Awhile to meet thee, loved one, there;
Pure as themselves, and not less fair.

I see them now delighted gaze,
Thy loveliness their theme of praise,
And joyous smiling, fondly twine,
Their arms around thy form divine;

And twining in thy midnight hair
That waves along thy forehead fair,
Sweet flowers impearled in fragrant dew,
And colored by the rainbow's hue.

I see them now all fondly press,
Their kiss on lips of loveliness,
And wandering with thee, hand in hand,
Through pearly walls of fairy land.

Where magic palaces arise,
Like clouds along voluptuous skies,
Elysian fields—Ambrosial bowers—
To win thee from this world of ours.

Of beauty's type thy form and face
The perfect mould of human grace;
Thy hands clasped on thy bosom fair,
As if engaged in silent prayer.

Beneath thy folded marble arms
Thy swelling bosom hides its charms;
Where every virtue calmly glows,
And sacred love unceasing flows.

Thy teeth of whitest pearl disclose
Through parted lips of blushing rose,
And graceful eye-brows arched above,
Seem penciled by the hand of love.

That eye of life and love is hid
Beneath its stainless waxen lid,
Dark bordered by its silken fringe,
That shades thy cheek of vermil tinge.

How calm thy sleep! how pure thy rest!
The sabbath of an Angel breast;
Awake! dear one, I cannot bear
To see thee smileless sleeping there.

The fearful thought intrudes, that death
Has robbed thee, sleeping, of thy breath;
Appalled, soul shrinks with horror dread—
For what were life, if thou wert dead!

From Angel worlds come back awhile
To bless me with thy living smile,
'Thou art my' joy, my pulse, my breath,
Thy waking's *life*, thy sleeping's *death*!

Published during the late war, in the "Houston (Texas) Telegraph."

TO MY SNORING WIFE.

Respectfully dedicated to the Author of "My Sleeping Wife."

In sleep's fair realm thy spirit roams
And gay mosquitoes leave their homes,
Singing with merriment they greet
Thy snowy hands, and dainty feet.

I see them now on airy wing,
O'er thy loved form exulting sing;
With murmurings fond their love they speak,
And nestle on thy downy cheek.

From mazes of thy silken hair
Whose darkness floats o'er pillows fair,
They wander to thy dewy lip,
And its red wine delighted sip.

But as they reel in drunken glee,
And clap their wings in ecstasy,
Sad warning sounds their senses greet—
They pause above that banquet sweet.

Those ruby gates wide open fly,
And that soft bosom heaves a sigh,
Whose fragrance breathes of orange flowers,
Or violets steeped in dewy showers.

From pearly portals of that nose,
A rich and tender music flows ;
At first, 'tis fitful, soft and low,
As Zephyr's that o'er roses blow.

And then it swells upon my ear
In cadence deep, and wild and clear,
And fearful *snorts* shake that fair frame—
I pray thee, wake, my peerless dame!

Some cruel demon has possessed
Thy classic nose, thy heaving breast;
Oh, dear one! break that demon's spell—
Thy Alfred's fears, ah! who will quell?

Why did'st thou sup on cabbage cold,
While I, sweet love, did plead and scold?
Why mock me with thy merry laugh,
As buttermilk thou bad'st me quaff?

She hears me not—she sleeps—she *snores*—
And louder yet the music roars!
The scared mosquitoes flit away—
Ah, would that I could flit like they!

I heed no more the beauties rare,
Of glowing cheek and loosened hair,
Her “folded arms” of marble-white,
No longer thrill me with delight—

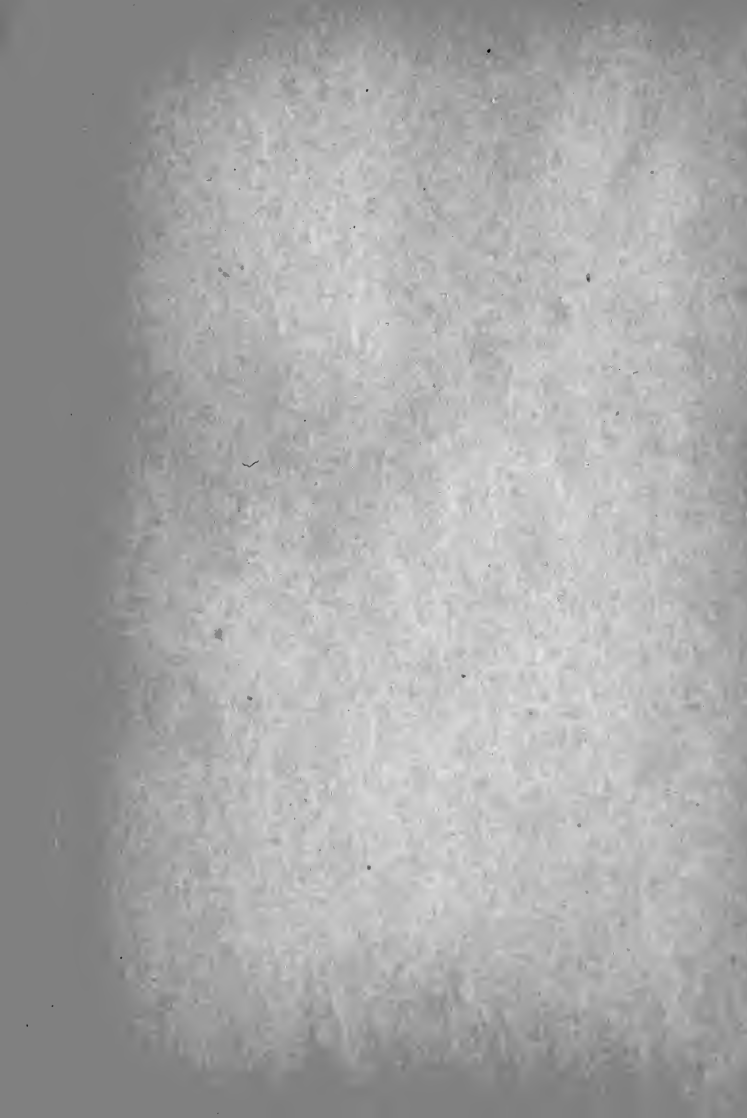
I long to close those crimson lips,
To hold that nose with finger tips,
From whence those deep discordant notes
Upon my tortured bosom floats.

From “*Angel Worlds*” come back, my love,
Through cabbage beds no longer rove,
“Thou art my joy, my pulse, my breath,
Thy *waking's life*, thy *sleeping's death*!

Adieu, ye “Heavenly nine” adieu!
You've lost a votary *tried* and true,
My fancy's wing droops ere it soars—
Alas! my “sleeping beauty” *snores*!

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